



Annual General Meeting 2018

Report by the Chairman of the Board of Trustees

This report covers the period from the 2017 AGM in November last year to November 2018.

This is the end of my third year of a three year appointment as Chairman of the Board of Trustees of FCWT.

Governance

Over the year I have been ably supported by my fellow **Trustees**. We have been 9 in number. We have 2 trustees standing down; Wils Metcalfe, who has served for 6 years and Karen Mitchell, who has served 1 year and is leaving the area. I would like to thank Wils and Karen for their contribution. Wils will continue as a volunteer and will continue to manage our website. Without singling out anyone in particular, I would like to thank my fellow trustees for their continued support. We have a broad range of skills within the group which are pertinent to the business of running the Trust and much effort has been expended by all. As ever, we are on the lookout for new blood. We can have a maximum of 12 members.

Members

Numbers have increased from 88 last year to 97. This increase can be attributed, in some part, to the effort that has gone into encouraging lapsed members to re-join. Membership subscriptions and donations are important source of income for the Trust. The simplified method of renewal and payment of annual subscriptions by standing order payment is working well. Notwithstanding which, we are happy to accept manual payments by cheque. We are grateful to those of you who continue as members and also to those who have made donations. We value your continued support.

Volunteers

With the exception of specialised services, the maintenance work in the Woodlands and on the Bike Track is carried out by volunteers. We have three volunteer groups: Sanquhar, Muiry / Newforres and Bike Track. The Muiry work parties are scheduled on an ad hoc basis whilst those at Sanquhar are held monthly. The work comprises mainly of clearance of non-native invasive species and path maintenance. The numbers at Sanquhar were as high as 12 but tailed off later in the period. The Bike Track now has a dedicated team of volunteers carrying out ongoing maintenance. The Bike Track squad held three sessions over the summer and plan to go monthly on Sundays next year. We are grateful to those who give up their time to the monthly work parties and we continue to look for new volunteers.

In addition to the regular FCWT work parties, volunteer work has been carried out by Wild Things and Earth for Life.



Major achievements

We completed year 4 of our 5 year programme of rhododendron and laurel clearance with the help of a specialist contractor. This work is being funded by Berry Burn Community Fund.

Containing invasive species will be an ongoing feature of the Trust's work.

Development of the Coffin Field as a wildflower meadow continues with encouraging results.

A new bench donated by Benromach was installed at the north end of the large lochan adjacent to the Coffin Field.

Four trustees underwent First Aider training.

Path refurbishment works were carried out at Muiry / Newforres and Sanquhar.

Sanquhar Woods thinning programme was completed in February. 1,330 te of timber was extracted realising income of £19,500

The Sanquhar Mains access road and some internal tracks required remedial work after the timber extraction.

Events

FCWT participated in Culture Day in September by hosting a stand with information about the work of the Trust.

We hosted a 'Dirt Crit', mountain bike event which was attended by 67 young mountain bikers.

Trustee Dan Puplett appeared on the BBC TV Landward programme in May which featured the Dawn Chorus in Sanquhar Woods.

Admin

Our website is functioning well. We are receiving correspondence from members and others through that medium and posting news of events.

An FCWT Facebook page has been set up which is attracting lots of interest. This allows us to target a wider audience beyond our website.

Newsletters were issued three times over the course of the year and mainly distributed electronically. Although we still cater for those without computer access.

Work was carried out to ensure compliance with the new data protection legislation (GDPR)

A formal review and update was made to our five year plan.

Planning Issues

The Trust has formally responded to the Main Issues Report of the Moray Local Development Plan on three areas which have a potential impact on our woodlands.

1. Dallas Dhu Development
2. Small field to north of Muiry Woods
3. OPP4 Cathay Housing Development

Formal objections have been submitted against the OPP4 development as the determination process continues.

We continue to monitor and respond to the A96 Dualling consultation.

Plans for the coming year

Continue into year 5 of the rhododendron and laurel clearance.

Bike Track safety signage to be upgraded.

Paths maintenance work in Sanquhar and Newforres.

FORRES COMMUNITY WOODLANDS TRUST



Financial

At Year End 31 March 2018 an operating surplus of £14,587 was reported (2017 – £10,441 deficit) This was mainly attributable to income from timber sales and grant funding from Berry Burn Community Fund. Our current cash position is healthy. However, I would remind members that 2018 was an exceptional year due to the income from timber sales whereas our income from subscriptions and donations falls some way short of our annual operating costs. Further details are contained in the Financial Statements which are available for your perusal and we will field any questions.

In closing, I would again like to thank our members and volunteers for their continued support and thank you all for your attendance tonight.

Donald J Wright
Chairman